15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR? Khasi AR?

182 434 very wealthy households still maintain their former economic activities, but the majority have been impoverished, becoming daily labourers for the wealthy ones or for road construction. Thus considerable internal economic differentiation has begun to appear in the community.

182 245 648 Though the recent economic depression brought poverty to Jaintiga, the standard of living is still strikingly higher than that of neighbouring tribes. Studying such economic aspects of Jaintiga, I wondered at first why these neighbouring tribes have remained as they were, except for temporary employment at Jaintiga: why, looking at the prosperity of Jaintiga, they did not adopt the way of the Jaintiga people?

Indeed some of them attempted to imitate the Jaintiga economy, but the results were unfortunately not favourable to them. First, both pan-leaf and orange cultivations were entirely new to the tribal peoples, and the technique was quite different from that of dry rice cultivation in the jhum field. Pan cultivation requires very delicate care which is almost impossible to manage for people who have been accustomed to the primitive jhuming cultivation. For instance, when they go into pan gardens, they have to wash themselves and put on special clean clothes in order to prevent the spread of epidemic [illegible]. Tribal people, who seldom wash their clothes, or mostly go naked, could hardly keep pan gardens. In this respect the Khasi are entirely universal, having specialised in this economy for a long period, even as they believe, from time immemorial.

On the other hand, the technique of orange cultivation is much easier than that of pan-leaf, but it takes several years to obtain a yield; it requires considerable capital to begin with. For the jhum cultivators, who usually did not have cash income nor funds, it was almost impossible to start it, while the Khasi were able to raise funds from the selling of the pan-leaf. Furthermore, the [423] management of such gardens, either pan-leaf or orange, differs also from that of the jhum field as it entirely depends on individual enterprise based on private land ownership, which is new for those tribes where the community owns the land. Therefore the possibility of starting orange gardens is restricted to special individuals among them belonging to exceptionally rich and powerful households. A few households in neighbouring villages did, in fact, start orange gardens, adopting the technique of the Jaintiga people. This was around 1940 and they were expecting to have the yield around 1950. However, unfortunately, when their oranges began to come into production, orange disease started in Jaintiga and spread all over these areas. Their dream therefore never came true.

Besides oranges, some of them also established gardens of bananas, jackfruits, and papaias, which were more successful than the oranges. These plantations started much earlier than oranges in this area, though not in great quantity. The products were sold to the Jaintiga people who sold them again to Bengalee merchants. The question arises why were they not sold directly to Bengalee merchants, when the profit would have been much greater.

182 • 44 648 This aspect of the market economy touches upon very interesting problems concerning the relations between tribal and Hindu peoples. Such tribal peoples who live on a primitive subsistence level usually do not have direct contact with the peoples of the plains. There is always an intermediary between them. In this case it is the Jaintiga people who know both tribal life and Hindu life. They are also in between culturally. If a tribal cultivator sells his produce to a Hindu merchant, he would most certainly be cheated by the cunning merchant, as he is quite ignorant of trade. Tribal men do deal with markets directly, but only on a small scale at Hadong bazaar, and without making a profit: it is just the exchange of their basketful of jhum produce for an iron

15: Nakane E-5 (1955-1956) 1967 AR7 Khasi AR7

spade or some dried fish, etc. Products such as large quantities of fruits should be sold to the Jatinga people who buy them at reasonable prices.

The Khasi are born traders. This must be closely related with their economic technique, such as pan cultivation which makes it impossible for them to live without trading. Hence, though they are hill people, they have had close economic contact with the peoples of the surrounding plains. At the same time, some of them have had a very similar economy to that of other tribes, such as that of Sohkyndah and of Kongton; hence they are familiar with tribal economy. On the whole, their dealings with the tribes as well as with the plains peoples are fair, though they are hard bargainers. Indeed the Khasi are quite welcomed by both sides. Thus the Khasi play an important role as intermediary between the tribes living in the hills and the Hindu (and Moslems) living in the plains.[1]

The economic contact is the most important of the many contacts between Jatinga and other tribal villages. Social contact, as appeared in intermarriages, is a rather marginal matter for the total population. Cultural contact is negligible. I only observed one indication—some fashionable tribal girls sometimes wear Khasi women's dress when they go to the Haflong bazaar. In their contact with tribes, the Jatinga Khasis speak Hindi, which is the common language at Haflong bazaar for all tribes and peoples in this area. A few men of Jatinga speak some tribal language, but none of the tribal speak the Khasi language.

In spite of such great differences in culture, economy and social organization, the relationship between the Jatinga people and the tribes has remained very friendly. For instance, as I mentioned before (p. 175, note 3), the tribes lent their land to Jatinga people who were suffering from a great economic depression. Their actual behaviour also reflects such a friendly relationship. It is said that at the time of the Golden Jubilee of Jatinga in November 1955, many Zemi-Nagas, Kuki, and Cacharee came and performed their dances for the celebration.

1. The important role of the Khasi as intermediary is not only in the economic field, but also in the political and cultural fields: nowadays many Khasi officers are sent to tribal areas by the Government. They are very efficient in dealing with such work, because they are used to deal with both tribal and plain peoples.

[P. 178 is blank]

General area.—

1. Mankachar	Paddy and maize	...	Oxen, hoes and ploughs	Ploughing, dairy and chemical.
2. Jowai	Paddy, maize and vegetables	...	Oxen, hoes and plough	Do.
3. Dudnoi	Paddy, maize, etc.	...	Oxen, hoes and plough	Do.
4. Mawlaiawsaw	Paddy, maize and potato	...	Oxen, hoes and plough	Do.
5. Amlo	Paddy, maize and millet	...	Oxen, hoes and plough	Do.
6. Langpyrsang	Paddy, maize and millet	...	Oxen, hoes and plough	Dairy and chemical.
7. Mawkhli	Paddy, potato and maize	...	Oxen, hoes and plough	Ploughing.
8. Laphroh	Paddy and maize	...	Oxen, hoes and plough	Do.
9. Duarsra	Paddy, potato and maize	...	Oxen and hoes	Do.
10. Jyngkai	Turmeric, maize, millet and oranges.	...	Oxen and hoes	Do.

This table reveals that in one region there is bias for cash crops and in the other for food crops—more or less depending upon the soil and topography of the regions. Extreme hardship occurs when there is deficiency in food production or a glut in the market of cash crops. The cash crop producers are, of course, trying to adjust their crops to the changing market conditions. With the loss of market for oranges, the people in the border areas are trying to increase their kendour production and start cultivating paddy, potatoes, etc. Throughout the district, people are trying to increase wet paddy cultivation. Wherever water is available, they spare no pain to convert it into a wet paddy field. Similarly, increasing interest is evident among the people in the cultivation of valuable crops like black-pepper, cashewnut, etc., which have a good prospect in the border areas. It is felt that there is considerable scope for intensification of cultivation of chillies, turmeric, coffee, etc. But any new endeavour demands heavy initial investment which also is not within the reach of cultivators. Government should continue to advance adequate agricultural loans to the needy cultivators in a better planned manner.

Only 19 out of 28 villages reported use of bullock driven ploughs for wet paddy cultivation. But even in these villages animal power is not universally used. Of course, in the rocky fields people have no alternative to the use of hoes and spades but in many areas particularly in the wet paddy field, bullock driven ploughs may profitably be utilised. It is said that the farmers do not realise the advantage of ploughing for want of funds for purchase of bullocks, etc., is reported to be the cause of continuance of the old practice. Both broadcasting and transplanting methods are in vogue in paddy cultivation the latter being a recent introduction is gaining popularity. Some farmers in the project area villages have tried line sowing but according to them it is very laborious and requires so

24(1) 9(1) 9(3) 9.6—**Relative importance of crops**—Total gross farm area harvested amounted to [illegible] acres in Border area, [illegible] acres in Project area and 960 acres in General area.

From above table it will be seen that in Border area, maize accounted for the highest proportion of harvested area, i.e., 35 per cent, followed in order of importance by local sun, paddy, local leaf and millet which respectively accounts for 17 per cent, 10 per cent, 9 per cent and 5 per cent of the total harvested area. Other crops which account for [illegible] acres (1 per cent) includes melon, cowpea, banana, turmeric, tuber, blackpepper and other fruit crops.

Considering sale proceeds, it is clear that livestock happens to be the main option accounting for 38 per cent of the total sale proceeds followed by orange, paddy and local leaf which respectively account for 12 per cent, 6 per cent and 5 per cent of the total sale proceeds. Thus orange and local leaf which in pre-partition days were the main cash-crops in the Border area have been pushed to second and forth position respectively—the proportions backed by them, particularly by local leaf, being negligible. On other hand as there is a good market for local sun, Border people have taken to local sun cultivation in a more extensive scale.

24(1) 24(3) 9(1) 9.3 It is significant that while in Border area total farm area is [illegible] acres, total area harvested comes to only [illegible] acres including area under mixed cropping which is in wide practice in Border area particularly for orange, brinjal and to some other minor crops. The proportion of unharvested farm area amongst our is to considerable which can be accounted for the following reasons:—

(1) The farm area includes some new gardens particularly of tangerine which usually take quite a few years to come bride.

• [illegible] (2) Apparently a large number of orange and betel-leaf gardens were not harvested at all as there was no market for them.

24(1) 9.3 9.9 Turning our attention to Project area and General area, it will be found that paddy eclipses all other crops in as much as in the two areas it respectively covers 80 per cent and 60 per cent of the total harvested area in the respective area. In Project area paddy is followed by betel leaf, orange, potato and brinjal in order of importance while in General area it is followed by potato, millet, orange, betel leaf and brinjal. In both the areas as will be seen from table above, almost all the crops retain their respective position in value. Considering sale proceed, in Project area, paddy occupies the highest position accounting for 37 per cent of the total sale proceeds followed by betel leaf, orange, brinjal and potato accounting respectively for 9 per cent, 7 per cent, 5 per cent and 5 per cent of the total sale proceeds. In General area, in order of importance of sale proceed (mill), potato and betel-leaf are worth mentioning having respectively 42 per cent, 20 per cent and 9 per cent of the total sale proceeds.